



Comisión Nacional de Investigación  
Científica y Tecnológica - CONICYT



## **ALMA-CONICYT FUND**

### for the Development of Chilean Astronomy

## **2012 CALL FOR PROPOSALS GUIDELINES**

### **1. OVERVIEW**

This call for proposals is being developed within the general framework of the "Scientific Collaboration Agreement to Promote Astronomy Research," dated October 28, 2003, and its subsequent amendments, signed between the National Commission for Scientific and Technological Research (CONICYT) and the European Southern Observatory, the Associated Universities Inc. (AUI) and the National Astronomical Observatory of Japan (NAOJ), the executing organizations in charge of building and operating the Atacama Large Millimeter Array (ALMA).

The aforementioned agreement establishes the creation of a Fund for the Development of Chilean Astronomy, the ALMA-CONICYT Fund, which will be managed by CONICYT in consultation with a Mixed Committee made up of an equal number of representatives from Chile and ALMA.

### **2. OBJECTIVES FOR THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

This call for proposals seeks to support the development of Chilean astronomy by means of, for example, hiring new astronomers, postdoctoral fellows and technical staff, strengthening graduate studies programs, and developing theoretical or technological initiatives, without excluding other initiatives to develop national astronomy for which it is difficult to find alternative sources of funding.

For this call for proposals, the Mixed Committee is interested in receiving applications that include multi-institutional collaborations for the development of the required infrastructure, millimeter and sub-millimeter instruments, human resources, and experience in supporting the community in the preparation of proposals as well as data analysis and scientific interpretation of the results obtained with ALMA.

### **3. APPLICANTS**

The following institutions and/or individuals are eligible to apply and receive financial resources in this call for proposals:

- a. **National institutions** (universities, educational centers, scientific societies, etc), with legal status, non-profit, public or private, which develop or promise to develop work on research or education in astronomy, astrophysics and/or astronomical instruments, **jointly with a principal researcher** for the project, who must be tied to the institution.

**Only proposals under the Institutional and Multi-institutional category may request resources to hire professors and postdoctoral fellows.**

- b. **Principal Researcher with Institutional sponsorship:** researchers or professors of national universities who have the formal support of the institution they belong to.
- c. **Multi-institutions:** two or more national institutions and a coordinator tied to one of the institutions. In this case, the proposal must indicate which will be the main institution. **Only proposals under the Institutional and Multi-institutional category may request resources to hire professors and postdoctoral fellows.**

#### **4. FUNDING**

- 4.1. The maximum financing limit for Multi-institutional projects is **\$180,000,000.- (one hundred and eighty million Chilean pesos)** for two years of execution.
- 4.2. The maximum financing limit for Institutional projects is **\$90,000,000.- (ninety million Chilean pesos)** for two years of execution.
- 4.3. The maximum financing limit for projects with a Principal Researcher with Institutional Sponsorship is **\$90,000,000.- (ninety million Chilean pesos)** for two years of execution.
- 4.4. Budget items that must be declared:
  - a) Personnel: hiring of researchers, postdoctoral fellows, funding for thesis students, master or doctoral scholars and technical personnel.
  - b) Trips: per diems and travel tickets.
  - c) Operational Expenses:
    - c1)-Minor computer supplies – magazine subscriptions – office supplies and minor expenses.
    - c2)-Attendance to national or international congresses or events up to a maximum amount of \$15,000,000.- (fifteen million Chilean Pesos).
  - d) Capital Assets: purchase of duly justified equipment.

#### **4.5 Each institution may submit more than one project to the call for proposals.**

#### **5. PROJECT DURATION**

The proposals must be executed over a period of no less than one year and no more than two years. This period will officially begin on the date when the entire administrative act approving the corresponding funding agreement has been performed.

If the Project requires and requests in its proposal to hire a professor and/or postdoctoral fellow, the hiring Institution must send to CONICYT a copy of the contract signed by both parties. In these cases, the project has a maximum of one year to hire the professional, therefore the agreement and the corresponding performance bond, if applicable, must be valid for a total of three years.

#### **6. APPLICATION DOCUMENTS**

##### **Institutional Proposals:**

- **Application Form.** The principal researcher in charge of the proposal of the applicant institution must download and complete the application form in Word format, available on CONICYT's web site [www.conicyt.cl/](http://www.conicyt.cl/), section "Concursos en etapa de postulación" ("Current Calls for Proposals"), "Departamento de Relaciones

Internacionales" ("Department of International Affairs"). This form must be attached in PDF format.

- **Electronic Form.** At the moment of sending the Application Form, the institution must also fill out an electronic form with general background information.
- Attach in PDF format the **Letter of Commitment** of the applicant institution.
- If the applicant institution intends to hire permanent positions, a letter of commitment must be written by the legal representative of the respective main Institution or the Faculty Dean, in which he or she ensures the creation of his work position. This letter must be attached in PDF format.
- **Attach the Curriculum Vitae in PDF format** of the principal researcher and of the project execution team, including publications from only the last 5 years.
- For projects that require equipment, the application must include a description of the equipment and any other materials required, including quotations and supporting documents (attach quotations and documents in PDF).

### **Proposal from a Principal Researcher with Institutional Sponsorship**

- **Application Form.** The applicant must complete the application form, available on CONICYT's web site [www.conicyt.cl/](http://www.conicyt.cl/), section "Concursos en etapa de postulación" ("Current Calls for Proposals"), "Departamento de Relaciones Internacionales" ("Department of International Affairs"). This form must be attached in PDF format.
- **Electronic Form.** At the moment of sending the Application Form, an electronic form must also be filled out with general background information.
- Attach the **Curriculum Vitae** in PDF format of the principal researcher and of the project execution team (when applicable), including publications from only the last 5 years.
- Attach in PDF format the **Letters of support and certification**. In the case of an internship or research stay in Chile or abroad, the support letter from the academic or research institution where the internship or research stay will be carried out and a letter from the institution to which the principal researcher belongs to certifying his or her sabbatical period.
- For projects that require equipment, the application must include a description of the equipment and any other materials required, including quotations and supporting documents (attach quotations and documents in PDF).

### **Proposals from Multi-Institutions**

- **Application Form.** The applicant must complete the application form, available on CONICYT's web site [www.conicyt.cl/](http://www.conicyt.cl/), section "Concursos en etapa de postulación" ("Current Calls for Proposals"), "Departamento de Relaciones Internacionales" ("Department of International Affairs"). **The form must contain administrative and dissemination plans for the project and their expected impact.** This form must be attached in PDF format.
- **Electronic Form.** At the moment of sending the Application Form, an electronic form must also be filled out with general background information.
- Attach in PDF format the **Letter of commitment** from the involved institutions. If the project seeks to hire permanent positions, the letter must be issued by the Chairman or the Faculty Dean of the institution responsible for the permanent contract and must ensure the continuity of the position.
- Attach in PDF format the **Curriculum Vitae** of the coordinator and of the project execution team, including publications from only the last 5 years.
- Identification of the participating institutions and their respective letters of commitment in PDF format.
- For projects that require equipment, the application must include a description of the equipment and any other materials required, including quotations and supporting documents (attach quotations and documents in PDF).

The Proposals must be submitted in English.

The form and duly filled annexes should be attached in PDF format.

## 7. APPLICATION DEADLINES

The deadline for submitting applications online through the website <http://spl.conicyt.cl>, closes automatically on **Monday, May 7, 2012 at 12:00 p.m.**

## 8. EVALUATION, PRE-SELECTION AND FINAL DECISION

- 8.1.** Proposals that do not meet all of the terms and conditions established in these guidelines, including the submission of all required documents, will be automatically disqualified and will not continue on to the evaluation process.
- 8.2.** Technical Evaluation: external evaluators appointed by the ALMA-CONICYT Mixed Committee will assess the merit and relevance of the projects and the suitability of their proponents.
- 8.3.** The ALMA-CONICYT Mixed Committee will be in charge of reviewing the evaluations of proposals and make recommendations for the final selection of beneficiaries to CONICYT. It may also modify the requested budget allocation and the duration of the projects, if deemed necessary. The Mixed Committee has been established by Exempt Resolution No. 669, dated May 12, 2005 regardless of any later changes to its composition.
- 8.4.** The main factors that will be considered by both the external and the Committee evaluations are:

### For proposals from Institutions and Principal Researcher

Criteria	Scores
1. Quality and relevance of the proposal.	50%
2. Consistency between the objectives and the amounts requested by the proposal.	10%
3. Academic excellence: a) Of the main institution applying, if the proposal seeks to support postgraduate students; b) Of the principal researcher of the project and the project execution team if the proposal is presented as Principal Researcher with Institutional Support.	20%
4. Results and impacts of the proposal.	20%

### For proposals from Multi-institutions

Criteria	Scores
1. Quality and relevance of the proposal.	40%
2. Consistency between the requested budget and the proposed activities.	15%
3. Academic excellence of the participating team	10%
4. Expected impacts and dissemination	20%
5. Administrative capacity defined in the project	15%

Each evaluation criteria may be assigned a score from 0 to 5. It is allowed to use half points but not lesser fractions. In general, the approval threshold is estimated at three points.

The score guidelines are the following:

0. Does not qualify	The proposal does not qualify/or deal with the criterion under analysis or cannot be evaluated due to the lack of background information or to incomplete information.
1. Inadequate	The proposal does not qualify/or deal adequately with the aspects of the criterion, or presents serious inherent deficiencies.
2. Regular	The proposal does qualify/or deal in general terms with the aspects of the criterion, but there are important deficiencies.
3. Good	The proposal does qualify/or deal correctly with the aspects of the criterion, although it requires certain improvements.
4. Very Good	The proposal does qualify/or deal with the aspects of the criterion in a very good way, even though some improvements are possible.
5. Excellent	The proposal does qualify/or deal in an outstanding manner with the aspects relevant to the criterion. Any weakness is minor.

**8.5.** The final approval score of the project will correspond to an average of the scores given by the external evaluators, which will weigh 30% of the final score, as well as that given by the Mixed Committee of the ALMA-CONICYT Fund, which will weigh the remaining 70%.

**8.6. Ruling Resolution:** CONICYT, through the corresponding administrative act, will approve the ruling and will award the funds, based on the recommendations made by the Mixed Committee of the ALMA-CONICYT Fund.

**8.7.** The ruling may include a waiting list, if deemed appropriate by the Mixed Committee of the ALMA-CONICYT Fund. Whenever a winner forfeits his or her right to the funds or is unable to make use of them, this waiting list may be applied, in strict order of scores, according to the number of vacancies that open up. The waiting list will also be effective, according to CONICYT's budget availability.

If there is a waiting list, the Mixed Committee of the ALMA-CONICYT Fund will determine the minimum score to be part of it.

## 9. RESULTS OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Once the final decision has been made, the results will be published on CONICYT's website, where the waiting list will also be included if it exists. The results of the call for proposals will also be notified via certified mail to all applicants. If the waiting list is used, the beneficiary(ies) will be notified via certified mail.

## 10. OBLIGATIONS OF THE BENEFICIARY

### 10.1. Submission of documents

From the date of reception of the notification letter with the approval of the proposals, the applicant principal researchers or institutions will have up to **28 calendar days or 4 weeks** to submit all documents requested by CONICYT, that are required in order to sign the agreements between CONICYT and the beneficiaries of the proposals. **If these documents are not received within the established time frame, CONICYT will withdraw the award.**

**10.2.** The institutions that win the call for proposals must present a certificate of inscription in the registry of collaborators of the State and Municipalities as an annex to the agreement signed by both parties. This is a mandatory requirement for CONICYT to be able to transfer the resources, as established under law N° 19862 dated August 2, 2003.

### **10.3. Performance Bonds**

10.3.1. Applicant institutions that are not part of the State administration at the time of signing the agreement with CONICYT will guarantee the proper use and administration of the funds, as established in the agreement clauses, by presenting a performance bond, an endorsable promissory note or an insurance policy of immediate execution, for which the ALMA-CONICYT Fund shall provide an additional 3% calculated from the total approved budget amount to finance this guarantee. This guarantee must be valid until 90 days after the expiration of the agreement with CONICYT.

10.3.2. For Multi-institutional applications, only the institution that the project coordinator belongs to will have to provide the guarantee, as long as it is not part of the State administration.

10.3.3. Principal researchers with institutional sponsorship must present a **Promissory Note with Special Mandate**, in favor of CONICYT, at the moment of signing the agreement, in order to guarantee faithful compliance with the obligations set forth in the respective funding agreement of the project, which shall be renewed on a yearly basis.

### **10.4. Hires**

For projects that intend to hire postdoctoral fellows or permanent professors, the beneficiary Institution must announce the call for applicants<sup>1</sup> through national or international media, within the three months following the signature of the agreement and must inform the Department of International Affairs of CONICYT.

### **10.5. Submission of Scientific-Technical Reports**

The principal researcher must submit to the Department of International Affairs of CONICYT a technical-scientific report for each year of execution of the project, counting from the date of the resolution approving the agreement for the grant.

The **technical-scientific report** must address the progress or results of the Project, including a description of the activities performed and emphasizing on the results obtained during the period.

In addition, a technical-scientific report **must be submitted on October 30<sup>th</sup> each year, regardless of the actual time the project has been in execution.**

**Projects to hire postdoctoral astronomers developing science**, will also need to submit 1 (one) publication in mainstream journals (ISI indicator) to the final report, at the end of the project.

### **10.6. Statements of Expenses.**

**10.6.1** The beneficiary must save all of the original documents that support the expenses paid with the funds transferred within the framework of this call for proposals. These documents **must be submitted at the end of one year from the date of the resolution that approves the agreement** and must be available every time that CONICYT requests them in order to supervise the proper use of the funds. A statement of expenses must be

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<sup>1</sup> The date to be considered may be either that of the publication of the call for applicants or when the request for the publication was made to the international agency.

submitted to CONICYT with the original documents, according to the procedures indicated in the agreement.

**10.6.2** The checking or budget accounts exclusively used for the Project will also be subject to supervision and control by CONICYT. Therefore, they must be submitted along with the corresponding statement of expenses.

**10.6.3** The original documents that make up the statement of expenses will be returned to the beneficiary upon their revision.

**10.6.4** In the event that a document was reported and/or declared in more than one program to CONICYT, this institution reserves the right to execute the anticipated termination, ipso facto, of the projects involved and request the total or partial restitution of the transferred resources. If the transferred resources are used for purposes other than those indicated in the project, they must be reimbursed to CONICYT.

**10.7.** It is strictly forbidden to invest the funds transferred for the development of the Project in financial instruments (be they short or long term, of fixed or variable return). Should this be the case, CONICYT will unilaterally and immediately terminate the project.

#### **10.8. Acknowledgement**

The contribution provided by the ALMA-CONICYT FUND must be acknowledged in all of the activities funded by it, such as the scientific publications and reports (articles in specialized journals, theses, papers, etc.) and in dissemination materials, in accordance with the following suggested text: "*This work was made possible by contributions from the ALMA-CONICYT FUND Project N°...*". Whenever equipment is purchased, it will need to have a plaque indicating the number of the project and that the source of the contribution was the ALMA-CONICYT Fund.

### **11. TRANSFER OF FUNDS**

**11.1.** The transfer of funds by CONICYT will be subject to the fulfillment of the following conditions:

- Full completion of the administrative act that approves the agreement;
- **For non-State Institutions:** the submission of the corresponding performance bonds to CONICYT.
- **For principal researchers with institutional sponsorship:** the submission of a Promissory Note and Special Mandate signed by the researcher.
- In order to receive second-year installments, the submission and approval of the technical-scientific reports of the projects, within the deadlines established in the agreements.
- Before receiving any new transfers, the total amount of the funds previously provided must be settled, that is, 100% of the transferred funds.
- Budget availability of CONICYT.

**11.2.** For institutional and multi-institutional projects, the funds awarded will be transferred to a main institutional account. The beneficiary institution must have an exclusive checking account, or an exclusive cost center (exclusive budget account) to manage the incomes and expenses related to the project.

**11.3** For projects of principal researchers with institutional sponsorship, the awarded funds will be transferred to the account of the principal researcher. For principal researchers that have been awarded more than ten million Chilean pesos, the obligation of keeping an exclusive checking account will also apply, even if they are

funds handed directly to the Researchers. By the end of the Project, the principal researcher must transfer all purchases made to the Sponsoring Institution.

**11.4.** The funds transferred to the beneficiaries will be governed, in any regard, by Resolution N° 759/2003 of the Office of the Comptroller General of the Republic.

**11.5.** No indemnities shall be paid (for lack of prior notice, annual holiday or vacations and for years of service, etc.) with funds of the project.

## **12. MODIFICATIONS TO THE PROJECT**

In exceptional situations, at the request of the Principal Researcher and in duly justified cases, as long as no further funding from CONICYT is required, the Department of International Affairs may authorize modifications to the Project, with prior approval by the members of the Mixed Committee of the ALMA-CONICYT Fund. The modification will be made official through the respective administrative act of CONICYT, particularly if they pertain to the deadlines originally established in the agreement.

## **13. COMPLETION OF THE PROJECTS**

Projects will be considered as completed when they have fulfilled their objectives and expected results to CONICYT's satisfaction and the final report and statement of expenses have been approved.

## **14. RESTRICTIONS**

**14.1.** It is expressly established that individuals or institutions that have debts or other obligations or contractual commitments pending with CONICYT may not be beneficiaries of a project of this call for proposals.

**14.2.** Members of the Mixed Committee of the ALMA-CONICYT Fund may not apply.

**14.3.** No late applications will be accepted.

## **15. COMPLIANCE AND INTERPRETATION OF GUIDELINES**

**15.1.** CONICYT reserves the right to interpret the meaning and scope of these guidelines in the event that questions or concerns arise with regards to their content and application.

**15.2.** CONICYT may, at any time, before the signing of and during the execution of the respective agreements, verify total compliance with these guidelines and, more specifically, that the background information and required supporting documents of the applications submitted to the present call for proposals are exact and complete. Should any incongruities, omissions and/or incompatibilities be detected, CONICYT will render the grant ineffective or may prematurely terminate the agreement.

**15.3.** The background information provided by applicants will not be returned to them.

**To request further information, please send an e-mail to: [www.conicyt.cl/oirs](http://www.conicyt.cl/oirs)**

**March, 2012**